

**Domestic Tourism Pivot launch
City Hall 06 Dec 2021**

**Good morning
Alderman James Vos
Wrenelle Stander
Enver Duminy
Our tourism partners, Cape Town Tourism
Members of the media**

Thank you for being here.

Last week, right on the cusp of the summer tourist rush, we all got the bad news about the Omicron variant, and the immediate knee-jerk reaction from many countries to put us back on red lists and reinstitute travel bans.

We were looking forward to welcoming back a city full of foreign guests, but we will have to wait slightly longer for that.

When the bad news hit, we used that verb that became the global word of 2020: pivot.

Our team has worked quickly and innovatively to pivot our summer message to a domestic audience, and I am pleased to be here today to launch their work.

I have spoken about the need for Cape Town to be creative, innovative and nimble-footed. Today is one important example of how we are starting to show that in practice.

Our message today is simple: Don't let red lists ruin your Christmas list. Don't let travel bans ruin your travel plans. Instead, come to Cape Town!

If you are sitting at home in Bloemfontein or Pretoria or Modimolle, or wherever, and all of a sudden your travel plans have been ruined – don't stress, just hop on a plane to Cape Town.

Our beautiful and diverse city is ready to welcome you and your family for the festive season.

I love this City and want more local and international visitors to witness the views, the hospitality and the many attractions on offer.

The summer season is a peak tourism period for us. The tourism and hospitality sector is important because it supports tens of thousands of jobs.

So we're doing whatever we can to help sustain this industry through this difficult period. We'll be making another exciting announcement later this week.

We are also pleased that certain international routes remain open and active. It was exciting to be present at Cape Town International Airport last week and welcome the first United Airlines flight in 20 months, thanks to the pioneering work of our Air Access project which Wesgro runs.

This route between New York and Cape Town began operating in December 2019, but had to suspend operation a few months later because of the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

So after the lengthy hiatus, it was truly significant seeing that aircraft touch down on the tarmac, to see the water canons in a ceremonial welcome and the excited tourists disembark at the arrivals terminal.

Covid-19 has been a great challenge, but we are resilient.

With travel bans being implemented on South Africa after the emergence of the new COVID-19 variant, the City of and Cape Town Tourism is launching a second round of the Pocket Friendly Campaign aimed at highlighting affordable activities within the metro.

The Pocket-Friendly Challenge is a series of six video episodes where teams are given R150 per person to explore the neighbourhoods of Langa, Athlone, Kalk Bay, Sea Point, Kirstenbosch and Blouberg. Each neighbourhood is highlighted by a video, a downloadable route map and website feature.

Our beautiful City can be your holiday destination. We have everything here: beaches, adventure activities, wine farms, top-rated restaurants and hotels.

Let's support our tourism sector this December.

Come visit Cape Town! We welcome you with open arms.

Thank you.